



MacLaren Community Park Project  
Community Workshop Four  
Thursday, October 22, 2020  
Monday, October 26, 2020

## **Background**

In 2019, Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda L. Solis and the City of El Monte initiated efforts to engage the community in shaping a new vision for an unused area of open space in the southeast corner of the MacLaren site, approximately four acres in size. This engagement included the formation of a Community Advisory Committee and hosting workshops to identify active and recreational opportunities as well as potential concerns.

MacLaren Hall, which operated as a County facility housing foster-youth for short-term stays is viewed as an opportunity to bring much needed green space to a critically underserved community. Since its closure, much of the MacLaren property has been walled off and inaccessible to the community. Parts of the facility remain in use with administrative offices for County departments, a medical clinic and Alma Family Services.

The Community Workshops served as an opportunity to engage the public on the potential for a new park at the MacLaren site. The MacLaren Community Park Workshop Four provided participants a review results of the MacLaren Community Park survey, an overview of community engagement, and sought feedback from participants on site planning and design criteria. Participants provided feedback on different features via instant polling.

**Due to COVID-19, Workshop Four was hosted virtually via Zoom.**

### **Workshop Four Outreach**

COVID-19 limited the ability to conduct outreach in-person, thus the focus of outreach for Community Workshop Four was focused on digital engagement and utilizing community partners to promote the workshop. Targeted audiences for Community Workshop Four included: El Monte residents, the Community Advisory Committee, past workshop attendees, survey participants, El Monte community-based organizations, Mountain View School District, El Monte City School District and El Monte Union High School District.

To promote Community Workshop Four, Lee Andrews Group designed the digital postcard for Workshop Four, which was reviewed by the County of Los Angeles and City of El Monte. The postcard was also translated into multiple languages.

The postcard was distributed electronically to each of the target audiences and posted on the MacLaren Community Park website. Additionally, the project team employed the use of social media to build awareness of Community Workshop Four. Lee Andrews Group coordinated with the Office of Supervisor Hilda L. Solis to produce a video for social media.

## Workshop Four Meeting Format and Structure

As indicated, due to COVID-19, meetings were hosted virtually on Zoom. Community Workshop Four took place on two dates, Thursday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020 from 3pm to 5pm and Monday, October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020 from 6pm to 8pm. Both days featured the same program. The purpose for hosting two days of the same program was to provide attendees with multiple opportunities for engagement in case they could make one of the dates.

The overall project team consisting of the County of Los Angeles Chief Executive Office, Los Angeles County Public Works, Raw International, Lee Andrews Group, Ed Reyes and Tony Torres collaborated to develop the agenda for Community Workshop Four (Appendix Item A). The agenda featured the following opportunities for participants: overview of community engagement, review of the MacLaren Community Park survey, review of site planning and design criteria, opportunity for discussion and to field participant questions. The program also featured messages from the Office of Supervisor Hilda L. Solis and El Monte City Manager Alma Martinez.

Lee Andrews Group Project Team coordinated all aspects of Workshop Four including: assisting with development of format, drafting the workshop agenda, development of the PowerPoint, coordination with County of Los Angeles and City of El Monte to secure speakers, coordination of translation services, management of technical aspects of virtual workshop, and facilitation of workshop.

### *Overview of Community Engagement*

Rick Garcia of Lee Andrews Group presented the Overview of Community Engagement. He emphasized the important role that community feedback served in the development of this project. He discussed the three community workshops that had been up until Community Workshop Four.

The first workshop hosted on September 12<sup>th</sup>, 2019 introduced the community to the preliminary park concepts. This served as an opportunity to receive initial feedback on priorities, needs and concerns.

The second workshop was hosted on November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2019. During this workshop, the community reiterated safety and security concerns. With respect to recreational uses, the walking path or track was the most preferred option. Walking was expressed as the preferred means of getting to and from the park. There was support for a park that is locked up and closed overnight.

Community Workshop Three was hosted over the course of two days. Day one of the Community Workshop Three was hosted on August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020. The meeting reintroduced the El Monte community to the MacLaren Community Park Project. Participants provided feedback on amenities and features via a listening session. Issues identified included safety, traffic & speeding, parking in the neighborhood, trash and potential homelessness, crime and drug use or distribution.

Day Two of Community Workshop Three was hosted on September 2, 2020. Day Two focused on issues raised during the small group discussions on Day One of Community Workshop Three. Discussion and potential solutions were provided on safety, security, parking and access. Participants provided feedback on active and passive features.

*Review of MaClaren Community Park Survey,*

Joey Legaspi of Lee Andrews Group presented the Review of the MaClaren Community Park Survey. Mr. Legaspi discussed that the project team pursued a hybrid approach to soliciting feedback from El Monte residents. This approach included surveying residents in-person and conducting the survey online.

In-person collection of the survey took place in the City of El Monte from Thursday, September 24th through Wednesday, September 30<sup>th</sup>. Communities within a ½ mile radius of the MaClaren Community Park Project site were canvassed. Additionally, the canvassing team sought feedback from residents in other parts of the City. 257 in-person surveys were collected.

The Community Survey became available online via Survey Monkey on Thursday, September 24, 2020 and was live until Friday, October 9<sup>th</sup>. The survey was posted on the MaClaren Community Park website. It was promoted via social media, to the Community Advisory Committee Members and to past workshop participants. The project team also coordinated with the City of El Monte, Mountain View School District, El Monte City School District, El Monte Union High School District, and with community-based organizations. A total of 228 surveys were completed online.

Some of the key findings for the MaClaren Community Park survey included:

- The highest propensity of children from survey responses is elementary school aged
- Driving and walking are the most popular forms of getting to MaClaren
- 18% of those residing within walking distance would drive to MaClaren
- Set hours of operation are strongly supported
- See Through Fencing was the most supported option with respect to the wall
- Those residing within walking distance and those not residing within walking distance differ on their preferred option with respect to the wall (walk: 46% see through fencing; no walk: 70% no barrier + landscaping)
- Additional off-street parking on both Gilman and Durfee is supported, although at a lower level by those residing within walking distance of MaClaren site. (walk: both sides 65%, Durfee only 18%, no additional 13%; no walk: both sides 75%, Durfee only 9%, no additional 12%)

- Walk-in and Bike Access on both Gilman and Durfee is strongly supported
- Picnic tables, benches and water fountain are the top three features respondents would like to see
- Soccer is the most popular activity that respondents would like to see followed by basketball, softball, and walking path and tennis
- There is strong support for the following sports activities: organized play, instructional/recreational programs, and free play

*Review of Site Planning and Design Criteria*

Branka Olson of Raw International presented the Review of Site Planning and Design Criteria. Ms. Olson discussed the concept base plan, community input, survey results, existing conditions of the site, and required and fixed site conditions. This provided participants with perspective on the current conditions of the site, what would remain and what could be modified to develop MacLaren Community Park.

Ms. Olson emphasized that safety was of importance in the design of the park. Branka highlighted the various activity zones of the park where potential park features and amenities would be located. During Branka’s presentation, there were breaks to allow for Community Feedback via the Zoom chat and raise hands features. Additionally, instant polls were used to engage the participants.

There were four instant polling questions asked of participants during Community Workshop Four. The survey questions and results are provided below.

Instant Survey Results

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1. With respect to East (Gilman) and West (Durfee) Boundaries would you prefer?

Day One	Participants	Percentage	Day Two	Participants	Percentage	Total	Average
Open Access Park	10	59%		9	56%	19	58%
Fenced with Gates	7	41%		7	44%	14	42%

2. With respect to the East Pocket, would you prefer?

Day One	Participants	Percentage	Day Two	Participants	Percentage	Total	Average
Tennis Court	13	93%		11	86%	24	89%
Extended Parking	1	7%		2	14%	3	11%

3. With respect to the Courtyard Pocket, would you prefer?

Day One	Participants	Percentage	Day Two	Participants	Percentage	Total	Average
Quiet Area	2	15%		10	50%	12	36%
Toddler Play Area	11	85%		10	50%	21	64%

4. With respect to the Open Green Zone, would you prefer?

Day One	Participants	Percentage	Day Two	Participants	Percentage	Total	Average
One medium soccer field	1	14%		7	70%	8	35%
Two small soccer fields	12	86%		3	30 %	15	65%

**Findings**

- 58% of all respondents support an open access park
- 89% of all respondents support a tennis court in the East Pocket
- 64% of all respondents support a toddler play area in the Courtyard Pocket
- 65% of all respondents support two small soccer fields in the Open Green Zone
- There was a difference of support with respect to the Courtyard Pocket from Day One and Day Two
- There was a difference of support with respect to the Open Green Zone from Day One to Day Two

## Next Steps

This Maclaren Community Park Community Workshop was the fourth series of meetings hosted to engage the public on the proposed park. Overall, there was a total of six community meetings hosted for this project, as Workshops Three and Four both consisted of two meetings.

After Community Workshop Four, the Project Team hosted one more meeting with the Community Advisory Committee to seek a consensus recommendation on the final site design. Approval of the final site design was unanimous. Following the November Community Advisory Committee Meeting, an Open House was hosted. This was the last community meeting for the project.

Although, public meetings have now concluded, it does not represent the final opportunity for community engagement. The project maintains a website which will include up to date information on the project as well as opportunity to receive comments from the public. Additionally, the project maintains social media profiles on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. These channels can also serve as mediums to connect with the community on project updates.

The next phase of activity will focus on completion of the funding applications for the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy and the State Park Program.

## Appendix

**Community Workshop #4**  
**Day One: Thursday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020**  
**3:00 PM – 5:00 PM**  
**AGENDA**

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87076444006>

Zoom Call – In: (669) 900 – 6833

Zoom ID: 870 7644 4006

### **Agenda (120 minutes)**

- 1) Welcome – Rick Garcia (5 minutes)
- 2) Introductions – Ryan Kristan (5 minutes)
- 3) Opening Remarks (10 minutes)
  - a) Guadalupe Duran – Medina – Office of Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda L. Solis
  - b) Alma Martinez – El Monte City Manager
- 4) Overview of Community Engagement – Rick Garcia (10 Minutes)
- 5) MacLaren Community Park Project Survey – Joey Legaspi (10 Minutes)
- 6) Site Planning and Design Criteria – Goals, Objectives, and Program– Branka Olson and Lee Andrews Group (60 Minutes)
- 7) Question and Answer – Rick Garcia (15 Minutes)
- 8) Next Steps and Closing – Joey Legaspi (5 minutes)